

Choosing the Best Grass or Grasses for Your Pasture

Answer all questions:

1. What types of livestock will you put on the pasture?
2. Do you have the ability to irrigate?
3. Do you irrigate all year long or is water restricted in the warmest part of the year?
4. Do you have the ability to mow?
5. Do you have the ability to spray herbicides?



Single grass types versus a mixture? A single type of grass will cut down on animals choosing some grasses over others leaving grasses needing to be mowed. A mixture will allow grasses with different growth pattern to be available for the livestock. Planting bunch and sod-forming grasses fills in the pasture well. Bunch grass usually provide more tons of forage per acre. After you have answered the questions above review the advantages and disadvantages of the grasses as you make a choice what grasses will work best for you.

Add legumes? The challenge when you add legumes is that you can't spray a broadleaf herbicide without damaging your legumes. If weed pressure is not too great, spot spraying may be effective.

Getting rid of [weeds](#) before you plant will help in your battle to keep weeds out. You will not be able to spray herbicides until you mow it down three times without damaging your grass seedlings. You will want to keep cattle and goats off the new pasture for at least 6 months (horses and sheep wait 18 months) to allow roots to grab hold of the soil, otherwise they will pull the grass out by the roots.

Are you going to purchase individual grass (and legume) seed and mix it yourself? If not, it may save time to research available mixes and choose the one that makes sense to you. Watch for the percent of weed seed, it can vary widely. Don't plant weeds.

For additional information: <http://animalag.wsu.edu/forages/index.html>.